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## Saguaro National Park News Release



*For Immediate Release*

April 23, 2008

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### May Programs Offered at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park is offering a series of programs this spring that will explore the wonderful natural and cultural history of the park. Join naturalists for an evening walk in the park, or join a local expert for a presentation in the visitor center. Programs will be offered at both districts. There is no charge for interpretive programs, but park entrance fees apply.

#### **Special Programs offered at the Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) include:**

**May 9                      7:00 p.m.                      Night Walk**

This year Saguaro National Park commemorates its 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday. To celebrate, the park is offering a special series of programs highlighting important park themes. Join Park Ranger Josh Boles for this 1.5 hour hike through the Sonoran Desert at night, and discover how important dark nights are to the plants and animals of the park. Bring water and a flashlight. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on May 23.***

**May 10                      7:00 to 11:00 a.m.                      Buffelgrass Weed Pull**

Volunteers will work with Park staff to remove a patch of buffelgrass, an invasive non-native plant which threatens the Sonoran Desert. We will meet at the Rincon Mountain Visitors Center and then carpool to a work site near Javelina Picnic Area. Please park in the Administrative Parking Lot (first right after entering the park, follow road to the parking lot just south of the visitor Center parking area). Wear sturdy hiking shoes, long pants and a hat. Bring plenty of water and gloves (if you have them); tools and gloves will be provided. Following the event, we will relax over snacks and beverages. Advanced reservations are recommended, so we can get a general participant count. Call 733-5187, or sign up at the visitor center.

**May 21                      7:00 p.m.                      A Taste of the Desert**

Join park staff in the visitor center auditorium and explore the many uses of native desert plants, including those used for food, shelter, clothing, medicine and more. Several items will be available for sampling! Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program is wheelchair accessible.***

**May 28                      10:00 a.m.                      Geysers, Grizzlies...and Cactus?**

Come celebrate our National Parks with a virtual tour of this extensive system of national parks, monuments, recreation areas, historic sites and more. Park Ranger Jeff Wallner shares his many visits to our national park sites as he shows us how it all got started. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program is wheelchair accessible.***

**May 28                      11:00 a.m.                      History of the Rincons**

Join cultural landscape historian Robin Pinto in the visitor center auditorium for a trip back in time to meet the early settlers of the Rincon and Tanque Verde Valleys. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5151. ***This program is wheelchair accessible.***

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#### EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## **Special Programs offered at the Tucson Mountain District (Saguaro West) include:**

### **May 3            7:00 a.m.            Bird Walk**

Join birding guide Sandy McMahan to see some of the twenty-five species of birds that are year-round residents of Saguaro National Park. Meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center. The group will caravan to several nearby locations. The walking is considered easy, on flat but dirt and rocky trails. Persons of all ages, with or without bird watching experience, are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring water and sun protection, along with binoculars and bird guides if you have them. The walk usually lasts 1.5 hours. For more information call 733-5158.

### **May 9            5:15 p.m.            Twilight Hikes**

These hikes are 2 to 2½ miles and two to two and a half hours in length. They are scheduled to begin approximately one hour before sunset. Meet at the King Canyon Trailhead, which is located on Kinney Road across from Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. Terrain encountered on the hike is sandy, with some rock outcroppings. Some of these can be skirted, but some must be climbed. We will return to the parking area in the fading light after sunset, on an alternate trail or along a rocky old mining road. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5158. ***This program will also be offered on May 23, again at 5:15 p.m.***

### **May 10            3:00 p.m.            Manuel Jose de Sossa, Royal Scribe – How Arizona got Its Name**

Manuel Jose de Sossa was an extraordinary frontiersman of the early Spanish colonial period in southern Arizona and northern Sonora. He was well educated and was a government scribe and records-keeper for the Northern missions. He operated the two earliest ranches—the Guevavi and San Mateo—for Juan Bautista de Anza, senior, and probably taught the more famous Juan Bautista de Anza, the second, how to read and write. It is his writings that ultimately gave the name to our present-day state. Join us in the visitor center auditorium for this living history, or “chutauqua” performance – it will bring this remarkable individual and his times to life while giving the audience the complete story of how the name “Arizona” came into being. *This program is wheelchair accessible.*

## **Daily Programs**

Both districts of Saguaro National Park offer a variety of daily patio talks, garden walks and short desert hikes, not listed above. Contact either visitor for schedules or visit us at <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/things2do.htm>.

## **Visitor Center Locations/Phone Numbers**

Red Hills Visitor Center (Saguaro WEST)  
2700 North Kinney Road  
Tucson, AZ 85743

(520) 733-5158

Rincon Mountain Visitor Center (Saguaro EAST)  
3693 South Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85730

(520) 733-5153

For more information about Saguaro National Park and some of its partners, Friends of Saguaro National Park and the Western National Parks Association, visit these websites:

[www.nps.gov/sagu](http://www.nps.gov/sagu)  
[www.friendsofsaguaro.org](http://www.friendsofsaguaro.org)  
[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)